

## Sutton Power Choice

### **Welcome to the Sutton Power Choice electricity aggregation program**

The Town of Sutton is developing a plan for an electricity aggregation program, which will be named Sutton Power Choice. Electricity aggregation is a way for a community served by a utility – in Sutton’s case National Grid - to use the bulk purchasing power of its residents and businesses to negotiate a favorable price for their electricity supply. Electricity aggregation can make residents, businesses, and the Town stronger by working together.

Sutton Power Choice benefits include potentially lower rates, rate stability, and the option to include greener energy sources. Sutton will use a competitive bid process to choose an electricity supplier for the Town. The program will launch once the Town’s aggregation plan is approved by the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities. The target launch is winter 2017.

All Sutton residents and businesses that currently receive National Grid Basic Service will be automatically enrolled in Sutton Power Choice. Anyone who has already established a contract with their own electricity supplier will not be enrolled. Residents and businesses that do not wish to participate in Sutton Power Choice will have the freedom to opt out of the program and remain with National Grid. After program launch, residents and businesses can continue to opt out at any time with no penalty.

Learn more about the program by reading the draft aggregation plan and the FAQ. If you have additional questions, please contact Doreen DeFazio, Energy Manager by email at [d.defazio@town.sutton.ma.us](mailto:d.defazio@town.sutton.ma.us).

### **Public Comment Period**

The draft Sutton Power Choice aggregation plan is available for review and public comment until March 2, 2016 at 5:00 PM. To review the plan, you may download a copy by clicking on [www.suttonma.org/pages/SuttonAggregationPlan](http://www.suttonma.org/pages/SuttonAggregationPlan) or attend the Board of Selectmen meeting on March 8, 2016 at 7:00 PM, where the plan will be discussed and will be available in hard copy for anyone who wishes to see it.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **1. What is electricity supply?**

Electricity service has two parts, delivery and supply. Electricity delivery is the process of bringing electricity to you along wires. Electricity supply is the electricity itself. National Grid is responsible for electricity delivery in Sutton. In addition, National Grid typically chooses the electricity supplier and passes that cost along to customers. This is called National Grid Basic Service.

Within Sutton Power Choice, National Grid will continue to deliver the electricity but will no longer choose the electricity supplier. Instead, Sutton will choose an electricity supplier for Town residents and businesses through a competitive bid process.

#### **2. How much money will I save?**

It is not possible to predict how much money you will save. Savings will depend on a number of different factors, such as:

- The rates that are included in the responses to the RFP (request for proposals) that Sutton will issue for an electricity supplier
- What type of customer you are (residential vs. commercial)
- How much electricity you consume

In other communities, average customer savings have ranged between approximately \$20 and \$70 a year.

Savings will appear only on the supply portion of your bill. Delivery charges will be unaffected by the Sutton Power Choice program.

### **3. What will change with this program?**

You will see two changes as a result of participating in Sutton Power Choice:

- On the Supplier Services portion of your National Grid electric bill, you will see the program supplier listed instead of Basic Service.
- The rate that you are charged for supplier services will change from the Basic Service rate to the rate that Sutton has negotiated with the selected supplier.

Otherwise, everything else will remain the same. You will continue to receive your bill from National Grid, you will continue to pay National Grid, and you will continue to call National Grid when your power goes out.

If you participate in budget billing or are eligible for any discounts from National Grid, those will be unaffected by your participation in this program.

### **4. Do I have to participate?**

All National Grid Basic Service customers will be automatically enrolled. But you do not have to participate in the program if you do not want to.

After the electricity contract is signed, you will have three ways to opt out before the program begins: 1) You will receive a letter in the mail notifying you of your right to opt out of the program. You may opt out by signing and returning the postcard that accompanies that letter. 2) You may opt out by calling the customer service number for the selected electricity supplier. 3) You may opt out online.

After the program begins, you will have two ways to opt out: 1) You may opt out by calling the customer service number for the selected electricity supplier. 2) You may opt out online.

You may opt out of the program at any time with no penalty or fee.

### **5. I have signed my own contract with an electricity supplier. Will I be enrolled in the program?**

If you have already signed a contract with an electricity supplier, you will not automatically be enrolled in Sutton Power Choice.

If you would like to participate in Sutton Power Choice, we recommend that you first check the terms of your existing electricity supply contract. Many include minimum enrollment periods and early termination fees.

To participate in Sutton Power Choice, you can call the customer service number of the selected electricity supplier.

**6. Who do I call when the power goes out?**

National Grid will continue to deliver your electricity and maintain the poles and wires. Call National Grid if your power goes out, as always.

**7. Will I receive a second bill?**

National Grid will continue to bill you for your electricity, and this is the only electricity bill you will receive as a participant in Sutton Power Choice.

**8. Will National Grid provide me with a lower quality of service because I participate in this program?**

National Grid's quality of service to you will be unaffected by your participation in Sutton Power Choice. The reason is because National Grid does not profit from the supplier services part of your electric bill. They pass the electricity supply charges along to you with no markup. They make their profit from the distribution charges. As a result, they are indifferent to whether they choose your supplier or you choose your supplier.

**9. What if National Grid's price falls below the program price?**

The program price will be set for a fixed period of time by a contract. National Grid's prices change every six months or less, depending on what kind of customer you are. As a result, it is very likely that for some months, the program price will be higher than the National Grid price. The program goal will be to beat National Grid's pricing on average of the duration of the electricity supply contract.

However, if the National Grid price does fall below the program price, you are free to opt out of the program for no penalty or fee. If you choose to opt out, you will be returned to National Grid Basic Service.

**10. How long will the program last?**

Until the aggregation is formally discontinued by the Town, it will remain in place. However, the specific electricity supply contract lasts for a set amount of time. The Town will establish a contract with an electricity supplier for a duration of time that provides the best possible value for the town. When that contract is finished, the Town will issue an RFP for a new contract. Existing program participants would continue their enrollment in the program automatically under the new contract. If the Town chooses not to issue another RFP and sign a new electricity supply contract, all program participants will be returned to National Grid basic service.

**11. I am currently under National Grid budget billing / eligible for the low-income delivery rate. Will this change?**

If you participate in budget billing or are eligible for any discounts from National Grid, those will be unaffected by your participation in Sutton Power Choice.

**12. I have solar panels on my property. If I join the program, will I continue to receive net metering credits?**

Yes. Net metering will work the same way if you participate in the program. Your net metering credits from your solar panels will continue to appear on your National Grid bill and will continue to be calculated based on National Grid's Basic Service price.

**13. Is Sutton the only community in Massachusetts creating this kind of program?**

No. Municipal electricity aggregation has been building momentum across Massachusetts. Sutton will be joining more than 70 other Massachusetts communities that already have active aggregations, communities such as Salem, Natick, Chelmsford, Swampscott, Greenfield, Westborough, the communities of the Cape, and many others.